

ALIVE ART AND THE END OF SPECTACLE¹

DOI
10.11606/issn.2525-3123.
gis.2023.208266

DOSSIER WORLDS IN PERFORMANCE: 20 YEARS
NAPEDRA

ORCID
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7725-9833>

LUCIO AGRA

Universidade Federal do Recôncavo da Bahia, Cruz das Almas,
Bahia, Brasil, 44380-000 – diretoria@cecult.ufrb.edu.br

ABSTRACT

This article outlines the thesis that there is a decline in the term spectacle both in its current sense of use and in terms of its viability as an expression of the various forms of articulation of human presence in art. For this purpose, I suggest that live artistic activity, in colonized countries, constitutes the foundation of societies of presence (Gumbrecht), even before the arrival of the invaders. Recognizing this difference can be a fundamental ingredient to promote the decolonization of art in these territories, pointing to possibilities that favor the abandonment of a European model of art and the world (societies of meaning/interpretation).


KEYWORDS

Live art; Performance;
Presence;
Anthropophagy; Show.

PREHISTORY OF THE PROBLEM

The idea of a possible decline of the spectacle and, at the same time, of the formulation of an all-encompassing term like “alive art,” came to me from several sources. I usually place two timeframes for this: April 2016 and March 2020. There is a third, which corresponds to the research approved at Center for Culture, Languages, and Applied Technologies (CECULT)

1. It has been a long time since the term “live art,” mostly used in Britain to refer to what in the USA is generally known as performance, has been outdated. In Brazil, this expression was frequently translated as “arte viva” or “arte ao vivo,” but none of the translations succeeded to mean what the original English words meant. For the purposes of this text, I will use the improper expression “alive art,” in which the addition of the vowel “A” gives more way to the sense of the kind of art that can only exist by means of a physical presence – i.e. performance art – but at the same time refers to all the acts of this kind that may offer an artistic experience (playing music, theater acting, dancing, alive concerts etc)



at Universidade Federal do Recôncavo da Bahia (UFRB), where I am a professor. The project attends to the same name of this article, which will also be the same name of the book that will result from it, *Alive art and the end of the spectacular*.

In April 2016, I took over the vacancy obtained by a public office selection process for the position of Professor in Arts at UFRB. It was also the beginning of a life in the countryside of Bahia (in the cities of São Félix and, after a year, Cachoeira) and of work in Santo Amaro da Purificação, where my campus is located, some 40 km far from my home.

Approaching this territory was something magical to me, because what usually attracts people here was not so present in my biography until the moment I decided to hold this position in the University. I was moved, certainly, by a desire to get away from the metropolis of São Paulo, where I lived for 20 years, until 2016. I also had a desire to look for other latitudes, a desire that increased from the second decade of the twenty-first century. One of my mates, for example, who lived in the house where I am now, knows Yoruba, was in Benin for a few years and is interested in music and the sounds of African languages. In contrast, I sort of “appeared” here with maybe no motivation.

CECULT’s campus is the most recent at UFRB. Seeking to avoid a “big city” like Salvador, I preferred to live in the *Recôncavo*, in a historic site.

CECULT houses several innovative courses, one of which was related to the area worked at for 15 years in Sao Paulo, where I was teaching at Undergraduate Program on Communication of the Arts of the Body and, for a brief period, at the Post-Graduate Studies Program on Communication and Semiotics at PUC. There, I collaborated to the development of an area that is still poorly recognized in Brazil: Performance Studies, a convivial environment close to the Performing Arts.

My arrival at CECULT coincided with frequent meetings for the production of the pedagogical projects of several courses, among them was Technologist in Spectacles, which later became “Technologist in Spectacle Arts.” The reappearance of the term “spectacle,” object of old controversies, in the title of a course at an innovative Center struck me as odd. In the

debate that followed, I suggested a divergent path, basing myself on the term “Alive Arts”²

It would not be a question of re-editing “*Artes do Corpo*,” in the manner of trying to produce a branch³. I graduated (Masters and PhD) in Communication and Semiotics, which has the originality of being a program with a regard for differences. The generic umbrella of Scenic Arts also did not seem to satisfy, either because it already existed at the University that had tutored ours, UFBA – the oldest and most famous for its history, with its important theater school and everything else – or even more because it would be falling back into the most common of places⁴.

In the late 1990s, there was a performance group that included the artist Marcelo Amorim, who was my mentor in a graduation course at SENAC⁵. “Art to the living” was its name. I followed its trajectory with enthusiasm for a while. There was also the translation of the term “Live Art” to “*Arte Viva*” or “*Arte ao Vivo*,” present in *Performance as language*⁶ (Cohen 1989). Me and Otavio Donasci used it in an article published in Canada (AGRA and DONASCI, 2006). The term was not particularly used by me, but it had the sympathy of a great colleague, unfortunately deceased, the theater director Francisco Medeiros who embraced it as an *umbrella* of the theater. He used to defend that theater only existed when it was “alive,” “standing,” that is, if it were presented, if it constituted presence. Although it was not something systematic among the various articles that I published between 2006 and 2015, most part of them always reaffirmed the comprehensive character of Performance, in line with what Richard Schechner always advocated, the idea of “live” appearing at least in the recovery of the musical memory of the teenager who used to prefer live records to studio ones. I dispersed this memory through some texts since I was moved mainly by an intuition of the value of something that today,

2. The term “spectacle” in Brazil can be understood as what in English may be called “performing arts.” Nevertheless, the theater milieu is not used to refer to a play as a performance, instead they call it a “spectacle.” Theater is the art, different from Performance Art, which is frequently understood as the kind of performance made in the Visual Arts field. This text also tries to bypass this discussion, by suggesting Performance Art as an autonomous form of art, different from the “performing arts” (like theater, dance etc). The term Arts of the Spectacle has been used in some schools including the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA).

3. Artes do Corpo (Arts of the Body, not Body Art) was the name of the undergraduate course I worked in during 15 years at PUC-SP (Catholic University of Sao Paulo). Its entire name was Communication and Arts of the Body because it was headed at the Communications Department. “Artes do Corpo” initiated its activities in 1999 and is still working today. It used to have three branches (or specializations, so to say): Theater, Dance, and Performance. I left in 2015, and do not know if it still remains as such.

4. Increasing the confusion around names, Scenic Arts is the “canon” title do refer to Performing Arts in Brazil.

5. SENAC (*Serviço Nacional do Comércio*) is an enterprise supported by the workers on the third sector in Brazil. It has a wide net of courses, including undergraduate and graduate.

6. Portuguese: *Performance como linguagem*

popularly, is placed in the poles of a supposed duality: face-to-face (alive) and virtual (live remote).

Perhaps, therefore, the question definitely emerged for me when, in the second time frame – that of March 2020 – the first *lockdown* due to the COVID-19 pandemics emerged.

Certainly, this an unavoidable event, which has been said to be the effective beginning of the twenty-first century, contributed to the discussion of what could also be called “Arts of Presence,” giving it a new meaning.

The reasons, however, for the use of the term “spectacle,” in those first meetings of 2016, would be exposed over time and it is the work of a research, not yet of this text, to understand why, in this Northeastern and Bahian context of where I am, the term “arts of the spectacle” stabilized its use. As time passed, the journey through bibliographies brought on by colleagues, combined with memories of some names in the Bahian performing arts, I began to overcome the mere intuition that the taste for the “spectacle” should have to do with the stereotype of the “bahianos” being very extroverted and devoted to exhibition. Without wanting to allow this type of dangerously prejudiced reading to settle in – avoiding the usual “not born, debut” and always believing in Maiakovski’s motto translated by Augusto de Campos that people exist to shine – I preferred to wait for argumentative elements that would generate an appendix in the research, to understand the trajectory of such term as the spectacle. It effectively happened. Our conception of what is theater, dance, show, opera, circus, etc. is always associated with the term “spectacle.” The term comes out of the mouths of Brazilians so easily that there seems to be no other that serves for a play, presentation, function, show; which are also used, but in disadvantage.

While the word performance continues to suffer substitution attempts due to its foreign origin or for simply “not being able to handle it” and still remains (I have been saying this for many years and I think it continues to be), the term spectacle, perhaps more for convenience, also tries to survive and remains firm to the negativity imposed on it by its heaviest critic, Guy Debord. Here and elsewhere.

So firm that the French Christophe Charle had to make the caveat right in the introduction of his book, whose copyright is from 2008 but arrived here in 2012 (Charle 2012). This is actually a sociological study: *The genesis of the Society of the Spectacle – Theater in Paris, Berlin, London and Vienna*. It is a study of the business which, inevitably, the author needed to name as indicated in the title. In this book, as it usually is, Theater and Spectacle are practically synonymous; but the spectacle is what started to be

disseminated by a certain public during the nineteenth century in the mentioned cities, and that the phenomenon he noticed as a feature of the societies of that time: they were societies of the spectacle. This became the main identifier of the functioning of these societies while, especially from the beginning of the twentieth century, the Theater asserts itself as the main entertainment. Except in the South American metropolises, where various scenic forms of sociability had more appeal until the arrival of the cinematograph, which takes popular taste by storm, expressed by an audience that does not consume theater as much as the middle class. This, learning the European accent, also assimilated the etiquette of the spectator and the scenic rite and made it its territory⁷.

Considering all this, I was quite puzzled by the recurrent use of the term “spectacle” and did not find the reasons for it at the time. However, as I told before, a small controversy arose during the reunions to prepare the plans of the course and the following negotiation generated two disciplines that contemplated the difference in views. Since there was one called “History and Theory of Spectacle Arts” I suggested another one entitled “History and Theory of Alive Arts.” At that time, I could never have guessed that the first one would be taught by me in a now distant 2019, nor that the other one – the one I proposed – would have its first edition directly affected by the pandemic and become a series of lives and then a complete set of videos – a *playlist* – which would then become an entire Channel that, as an Extension Project, I started to carry out on YouTube, by August 2020.

I also tell this story to demonstrate that the research has been impregnated with many contradictions since the beginning, and perhaps for this very reason it has been so enthusiastic for me.

The second date I mentioned, March 2020, corresponds to the beginning of the regular Semester that year, at my institution, for the first time, after a long time, within a regular calendar (since it had previously undergone changes due to work stoppages and other events) and, moreover, it would be the first time that all new courses would run regularly, after a long implementation process. There was also a lot of expectation in relation to the new classes as the Center was growing and the number of students had increased. We had even managed to start the semester on the classic

7. In an interview I conducted with the artist Katnira Bello on July 21, 2022, in the 11th program of the series *Perfolatino*, which I develop in the Extension Project Canal Arte ao Vivo, where I receive Hispanic performance artists (South, Central America and Mexico), she made a curious connection between performance and a form of popular Mexican spectacle that she knew as a child: the *Teatro de Carpa*, with notable similarities with our circuses and other amusement park attractions (such as Gorilla Woman, itinerant Wax Museums, etc.). The interview can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=agRMQP6Jnhw&t=18s> (accessed on 7/24/2022)

March 3, a date that reminds me of school throughout my childhood and part of my adolescence⁸.

After a week of classes, having barely met our first-year students, however, came the lockdown due to the worsening of the COVID-19 pandemic situation. This event was an abrupt break in a flow that had been carefully prepared. I had put meticulously together a program for three disciplines, all of which I would teach for the first time: a Sound and Movement Workshop, in which I intended to experiment with texts by Walter Smetak and invented musical instruments; Performance Studies, in which I try to introduce the area; and, as a sequel to History and Theory of the Spectacle Arts, taught by me in 2019, I would talk about the History and Theory of the Alive Arts for the first time. A complementary comment is in order here: although I “rebelled” against the term “spectacle arts,” chance allowed me to discover a way of making the genealogy of the concept of “spectacle” in that component. It was one of my best courses – looking back – and it allowed me to prepare the other in the same framework and create a cohesion between both. The seclusion of the pandemic seemed to threaten the realization of all this⁹.

In the resulting tension, and not knowing how that situation would play out, I turned to an attempt to “talk to the world” outside. I looked for a feature that I disliked and that had been of great interest in the past but of which I was now very suspicious: Internet streaming. Initially with lives on Facebook and, months later, already mastering some minimal tools, in the You Tube, I transformed the scheduled classes into weekly scheduled playlists. At first, the videos were huge. It took a while for me to adapt to a format that had less than 2 hours. But the positive response, the possibility of reuniting with friends that I had left behind over the last few years, since I moved to Bahia, in addition to the spontaneous discovery of several interested people, encouraged me and I became enthusiastic about the activity that, in a way, imposed a routine in that vacuum determined by isolation. Near the end of the first semester, I received a decisive suggestion from one of our technical staff who alerted me to the possibility of transforming this work into an Extension Project¹⁰ and thus “Canal Arte ao Vivo” was born.

8. The Scholar system in Brazil is composed of two semesters in a year, the first one generally beginning in February with a short interruption to the Carnival. But during the 60s and 70s the school years used to start in March.

9. At the moment I am preparing the English version of this text, I am also framing a new version of this course to offer it in the PhD in Contemporary Studies of Art at Universidade Federal Fluminense, where I also hold a teaching position.

10. An “extension project” is part of the attributions of a professor in Brazilian public university, which include the triad Teaching, Research, and Extension. The last one is understood as a kind of a service that the University offers to its community.


Based on studies made at my home library, in order to prepare these classes, I began what would later become a research project derived from a set of more than 40 videos on the theme “Alive Arts.” This project will have its final term as a book with the title “Alive arts and the end of spectacle.” The process itself yielded two other books, a revised second edition and the conclusion of the research project that I started in 2017 (Agra 2022b) and which became a book released in the year I write this text (Agra 2022a). The isolation of the pandemic, therefore, is the second important milestone, as it is from these investigations that some of the positions I present here result.

During this process, I discovered something that the American theorist Philip Auslander calls *liveness* (Auslander, 2006; 2008), a term difficult to translate into Portuguese. Despite the remote transmission, there was liveness, the possibility of encounters and reunions was decisive for me to be able to experience feedback on what I was working on, when speaking to an abstract but present audience. They forced me to speak objectively and with an effort to be clear. I must say that this circumstance changed when, some time later, I had to give “closed” classes, exclusive to CECULT students and, therefore, having to stick to the limits of the pedagogical program.

With the invitations to give lectures, I started using the same remote tools, forcing me to think about the process I was going through at that moment. In this way, two reflections became pressing: how to carry out a work as a performance artist in this context, considering even old and pioneering experiments such as *Corpos Informáticos*, a group that I first met in the 90s and that has a long history using internet telematic tools and, at the same time, what impact this could have on the reflections of Performance Studies in general, considering that even a vital theater like Teatro Oficina had carried out an experiment – in my view, the most interesting one yet – in online or “remote” theater precisely with the anti-play by Flávio de Carvalho, *Bailado do Deus Morto*¹¹. From these intertwined questions, others emerged, related to a teacher’s own craft and the dimensions of learning through this new and improvised way.

At the same time, the teaching/research/extension trinomial, which is a quality of public education (which should also be of private education,

11. *Bailado do Deus Morto* was a piece written by the multimedia artist and performance art pioneer in Brazil, Flávio de Carvalho. The piece was first presented at the Modern Art Club held by him in the beginning of 1930s, but it did not succeed because the performances were closed by Police under accusations of heresy and immorality. Teatro Oficina, led since its beginning by the director José Celso Martinez Correa, was one of the leading groups of Tropicalism with its presentation of the play *O Rei da Vela*, by the modern poet Oswald de Andrade, the creator of Antrophagic Art. *Corpos Informáticos* (Informatic Bodies) is a group founded by the artist Beatriz Medeiros and structured itself as a collective of performance art since the last years of twentieth century and the beginning of twenty-first.




but it does not happen), represents a challenge that could be answered in an original way in that context. This is how I understood that I was faced with the chance to intertwine these instances, producing content in an extension project and teaching content that was organically articulated with research. That is, I saw in this perspective the possibility of a virtuous circle of feedback that has been the engine of the work of which this text is a narrative part. In other public universities, by the way, there are similar experiments, which demonstrates that the issue here is not one of originality or “novelty.”.

As a conclusion to this topic: after finishing the contents of History and Theory of the Alive Arts, in the videos, I started to transmit the others that I taught in 2019, on History and Theory of the Spectacle Arts, thus closing a set that allowed me to leave for the second stage, in which I am now: transcribing and writing re-elaborations of these oral texts to transform it into a book.

GENEALOGY OF THE CONCEPT OF SPECTACLE

As mentioned above, the first part of the work consists of recalling the conception of spectacle as a productive denomination. How a certain artistic model of presence was formed and defined throughout the history of European art, exported and imposed after the colonial invasions and which forged the definitive understanding of what is understood by theater in Western conception, what it calls scene, theater, presence, etc. The premise is that the notion of “spectacle” is not an intuitive notion. In Brazil and in some other parts of the world, this notion, however, is taken as a natural designator for all scenic forms and even those that, under a given circumstance, become bearers of this category. Spectacle is a term that has, so to speak, guaranteed functionality. Its imprecision is not of the same nature as the term “performance,” which is more regionalized and prone to designate the same as “theater” in some places where it has established itself as a preferential denomination. In Brazil, the term “spectacle” has an almost complete homology to “theater” functioning as its popular and immediate synonym. At the same time, it seems to me, the term is configured as that typical use that intends to reveal the discourse of someone who is knowledgeable about the subject. Terms like play or “presentation” are either old, out of use, or do not belong in the prestige vocabulary. To avoid considerations that would be of Sociolinguistics orders – which is not my purpose here – I limit myself to stating the consensual pragmatics of the term, rarely evoking anything other than the activity of Theater itself or what we also call “show” (“brazilianizing” the Anglo-Saxon term) and very sporadically evoke in terms of what Guy Debord formulated in relation to the “society of the spectacle.”



In this sense, I sought to go through what we generically call “History of Theater” to understand how this notion of spectacle emerges. What research has brought me so far, are some interesting things. First, to perceive the profoundly ritual character of what is conventionally called Greek “theater,” a civic-religious activity centered around the exercise of “tragodya,” the cult of *tragos*, the goat, as it is well known.

After the Middle Ages we still have a type of scenic-allegorical “arrangement” in which there is not, for example, a proper idea of “character.” This is a notion that will consolidate itself in the transition to the Renaissance, of which the main center is, evidently, the fundamental archetype of all characters, Hamlet.

So, in ancient Greece, we have a sacred ritual. In the Middle Ages we have some scenic arrangements which barely seem to be something similar to what we know as “theater.”

The convergence of the Renaissance with the processes of colonial expansion beyond Europe will build a phenomenon that takes its most violent form from the transition to the European Baroque. In the neoclassical period, together with the consolidation of the beginnings of the national bourgeoisie, a theatrical model derived from the Renaissance tradition was established, claiming a supposed Greco-Roman origin and spreading to the centers of influence of wealth in the still Brazilian colony in the form of *Casas de Opera* (Opera houses).

Only in the second half of the nineteenth century, in line with what was happening in the main European capitals, did the Brazilian context seek to imitate the consolidation of what Christophe Charle would call the “Society of the Spectacle” (Charle 2012). The term, however, has nothing to do with Guy Debord’s ideas, despite being the same denomination. For Charle, it is the sociological phenomenon of the consolidation of theater as the main entertainment in the beginning of Industrial Revolution Era, as well as its progressive elitism sponsored by the emerging bourgeoisie, eager for entertainment that would bury the palatial artistic practices prevalent in the aesthetic environment of the continent for centuries. After museums and libraries were made public property – subtracting from the royal privilege – the theater undergoes a transformation (which is described by Charle in detail, with numbers and statistics) in the main capitals where it prospered mainly as a business, in addition to being a form of Art: London, Paris, Berlin, and Vienna, with occasional references to others, including Rio de Janeiro at the beginning of the twentieth century.

From then on, the forms that, according to common sense, we understand as being the art of theater are crystallized. What we have, in current

usage, was “attached” to the logic of “spectacle.” “Theater” becomes a term that implies situations such as the practice of buying a ticket, being in an audience as a spectator, behaving in a certain way that provides for the minimum interference in the actor’s activity, in addition to making this artistic activity one of the practices of a nocturnal and mundane life, facilitated by the development of lighting techniques in cities (gas and electric light). It is, from Charle’s point of view, a social phenomenon that, at first, holds a huge number of people (audiences of 3,000 spectators, for example) and then becomes more elite and reduces to the proportions we know, of 200 or less spectators. As I said before, this thriving business will face increasing difficulties as it faces the emergence of cheap forms of entertainment to compete with it. The most notorious is certainly the cinematograph. In other words, the process of excluding the poor and “ignorant” people from theater, making its buildings ever closer to the residencies of rich people, gave space to the increase of popular forms derived mainly from Circus, and new mass forms among which would be the movies.

From the beginning of the twentieth century, the time of the historical avant-gardes, what could be considered a counter-theatre develops, in which elements of the spectacle are used to question their own purposes. From the stripping of the scene, proposed by Artaud, to the deconstructive experiences of Picabia or Satie, in addition to the advanced proposals of the Russian Avant-Garde with Meyerhold or the FEKS, to cite a few examples; traditional theatrical forms were, thus, called into question. It became the subject of a *Modern Drama Theory*, an essential work developed by the German professor Peter Szondi (Szondi 2001), whose disciple, Hans-Thies Lehmann, in the 1990s, dared to defy his master with the idea of a “post-dramatic theater” (Lehman 2007). Before the crisis identified by Lehman, the spectacle itself was under questioning by Guy Debord, still in the early 60s, in a much broader context that, as we know, sees the spectacle as a perverse strategy that transforms all of society from consumption and supports the capitalization of life through entertainment. I only highlight these two points because they are, in this case, and for my purposes, just milestones on a journey that unfolds in pedagogical practice when this “timeline” guides the flow of the course that I have already mentioned. Anyway, in this journey I still tend to include Rancière’s “emancipated spectator” (Rancière 2010) as part of a set of questions over the functioning of theatrical language in bourgeois terms that, as seen, it ended up consolidating¹².

12. I am often asked about the absence of Brecht’s theory of “distancing” in this context. He is an author who also appears, but colored by the experiments of Piscator, his contemporary, and by other Latin American experiences more or less at the same time with more suspensive effects of the traditional illusion, such as the brief incursion of the *Bailado do Deus Morto* by Flávio de Carvalho, in Brazil in the 1930s. In any case, Brecht remains strictly within the usual theatrical game, even in his didactic plays.

PRESENCE – LIVE ARTS – ANOTHER NARRATIVE

The main discussion I propose with this timeline of the “performing arts” is its own genealogy. Now it is necessary to ask what could be put in the place of what is in declines? To answer this question, I resort to the displacement proposed by Hans-Ulrich Gumbrecht in his formulation on the *Presence Production*, in the book of same name, whose subtitle is “What Meaning Cannot Convey” (Gumbrecht 2010). I think it expresses the question that drives his entire study, and which can be summarized in the distinction he proposes between Societies of Meaning (or Interpretation) and Societies of Presence. Along with Luís Costa Lima, of whom he is a friend, Gumbrecht, for many years, organized a series of colloquiums, always around the theme “Materialities,” as a counterpoint to the forms of construction of human sciences events that in the 1980s exacerbated the use of mental artifacts totally conducted in a metaphysical plane and distanced from the immanent aspects of the analyzed subjects (in the case of Gumbrecht and Costa Lima, Literature, mainly). In one of these colloquiums, held at UERJ, in Rio de Janeiro, discussing the issue of the presence, Gumbrecht received the suggestion of a then student – today a professor at UERJ itself – João César de Castro Rocha, which would be decisive to adequately formulate what he intended. The idea of a “production of presence” has also helped me to think about how we build it, within a context like Brazil, among many others. We are, in Gumbrecht’s terms, an example of these societies of presence, in which the traditional forms of elaboration of that same presence, mediated by rules and fixed in behaviors defined around the notion of spectacle, are constantly violated. Moreover: even though we can consider that the embryo of the “spectacular” develops among us by the colonization process, via Jesuit catechesis – as is narrated in the canonical histories of Brazilian theater – it is not possible to assume that the society of presence has emerged from there, previously existing as such and gradually and violently being replaced by the society of meaning and interpretation. This was the expression of the literate privileges of those who held colonial power. And the presences and practices of the bodies that existed before Europeans invaded were simply disregarded.

Naturally, to understand this, an author like Gumbrecht, who provides a good critique of Western metaphysics, would not be enough. Hence the need to resort to another one that considered the pre-colonial dimension and the construction of a “Cannibal Metaphysics,” the title of one of Eduardo Viveiros de Castro’s books. From them, I also use the formulations of his most famous volume, *A inconstância da alma selvagem* (“The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul”), in addition to the series of interviews published by Editora Azougue, organized by Ricardo Stutzman in 2008 (Viveiros de Castro 2008; 2010; 2012). The investigations by Viveiros de Castro and Manuela Carneiro da Cunha that led to the formulation of an

“Amerindian perspectivism” become important in this context because they are connected to a displacement of conceptions related to the body and presence, with these terms sometimes having opposite meanings to those of the colonizer. More than that, in the cited interviews, Viveiros de Castro asserts several times the connection between what he proposes and the recovery of Oswald de Andrade’s “Antropofagia,” as proposed in the 1928 Manifesto, in the context of Brazilian Modernism; which was later resumed, in the 50s, in philosophical terms as well. At this point, the meticulous reading of the Anthropophagic Manifesto proposed by Beatriz Azevedo (Azevedo 2018) was of special importance. With this reading, I was able to come into contact with a key text by Viveiros de Castro and Manuela Carneiro da Cunha (1985) on the meaning of revenge among the Tupinambás, which confirmed the intention that, from the Rio de Janeiro, anthropologist encouraged me in the sense of understanding the Anthropophagy (rituals and Oswaldian formulation) as fundamental ideas to understand the production of pre-colonial presence and the violence represented by its extinction by catechesis and repression of practices such as polygamy, nomadism, ritual anthropophagy, obliviousness to the notion of property, and others, that were inconceivable within the Christian imaginary of the colonizer. From this, another research unfolded: one that I am currently developing at Post-Graduation Program in Contemporary Studies in the Arts at UFF, around the relationship between Anthropophagy and Decoloniality, which, in itself, already constitutes another path of study.

Even without referring to Anthropophagy as the incorporation of the enemy’s virtues and its ritual character, Gumbrecht’s discussion in the cited study has everything to do with this same practice of incorporation¹³, of transforming difference into corporeity. This is where the “cannibal metaphysics” is constituted, in which “humans are everyone.”

Amerindian perspectivism, therefore, is a guiding idea of this work.

In view of this, it was possible for me to propose an alternative to the already described “Timeline of the spectacle” that I then called the “timeline of the alive arts,” which already begins by being situated before the colonial project, and passes through it in its condition of a representation

13. Contrary to a Brazilian criticism that refuses the term “incorporation” since it is seen as being too tied to a religious sense, I insist on this same term, under the argument that “incorporation” is an act of assimilating something that belongs to another and that can, within of religious belief, even being a spiritual power, which does not contradict the perspective of assimilating difference and thus giving it another form. In fact, it is always a question of a giving body and, therefore, producing presence, which is what matters in societies that only understand meaning and interpretation from a corporeality, materially sensitive.

of the Renaissance in the newly invaded lands, to then follow the same historical path, with its divergences and deviations.

This new timeline – the timeline of Alive Arts – starts from the assumption of Gumbrecht’s society of the presence and is complemented by continuing with Oswald de Andrade’s Anthropophagy and by the writings of Viveiros de Castro, in the comparison of the narratives of travelers of the time and the analysis of Anthropologists. The source of the travelers’ texts reappeared in the post-invasion moment, in the transition from the Baroque to the Brazilian Neo-classicism, very fixed in a sub-form known here as “Arcadism” clearly of French inspiration. In this decidedly confused period, marked by extreme violence, with the extermination of indigenous peoples and the use of slave labor brought from Africa, an economy of absolute extraction of wealth, the contradictions intensify to the point it creates claims for deprovincialization, with perhaps still precarious stagings of medieval theatrical texts, mixed with what Affonso Ávila, a Brazilian researcher of Baroque from Minas Gerais, call a “vocation for the party.” I follow the footsteps proposed by this author, who tends to affirm the situation of “party” or “festival,” as one of the great singularization traits not only of Brazilian culture, but of the entire central continent of South America. The Festival often dissolves the imposition of an official artistic *modus operandi*, mixing forms of presence from other orders and origins, those of exaltation of colonial power, mixed with others representative of subordinated peoples (traditions of African and Amerindian origin). The first model is still a classicist exaltation derived from the Renaissance but, by being filtered by catechesis and serving its purposes, recovers the theatrical ways of proceeding from the Middle Ages, the main repertoire of the Jesuits. Thus, the first major Renaissance theater event was the first mass itself, narrated in Caminha’s letters and later, in the spirit of the nation-state, elevated to the founding chromium of official history. At the beginning of the colonial period, a kind of Christian *Erklärung*, which sought to catechize based on erudite artistic forms such as theater and music. But this is followed by pure and simple extermination, since the Captaincy system, with the development of an elite that, at the end of the eighteenth century, felt the demands for independence as well as for “civilizing” efforts in a country that would be populated by “buggers”¹⁴. In this confusing and contradictory environment, opera stagings gain prominence in the social dimension of the elite but compete, on the streets, with the various popular forms that are mixed and recreated.

14. The system of Colonization based on donation of vast portions of land to some families (*Capitanias Hereditárias* – hereditary captaincies) was adopted to administer the invaded land. While it was partly unsuccessful (since some of the owners simply did not assume their lands) it established a well-developed notion of landowning that is still prevalent today, despite the efforts for a land reformation in the Country.

In the nineteenth century, I was interested precisely in those forms that contradict what Luís Costa Lima calls “control of the imaginary” (Lima, 1991; 2013) and I therefore sought the reference of a live art that confronts current theatrical norms. Such was the case of the gaucho playwright Qorpo Santo, who, along with several others, were shipwrecked in an environment that did not perceive differences.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, before considering Modernism itself, I already point out the dissidence that I believe Oswaldian Anthropology represents; at the same time that, based on reports and research from the beginning of the century, I try to demonstrate that there is a consolidation of live art, mainly in metropolises such as Rio de Janeiro, since it was the capital of the republic, in the form of a show business which already prepared the decline of the hegemony of the theater in favor of countless forms of entertainment such as the circus, the cinematograph, electrified entertainment and live music, a lot of live music.

Even though the festivals of the Week of Modern Art in São Paulo, in February 1922, were live, there was no popular perception of the event while in the field of popular spectacle, Black people and women already dictated new forms of behavior. There is another narrative, therefore, about what we could understand of what live arts would be and which sets in motion a process that today we perceive as escaping from the traditional spectacular forms in Brazil.

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Lucio Agra is a professor, researcher, artist. PhD in Communication and Semiotics PUC SP (1998); Professor at UFRB (Universidade Federal do Recôncavo da Bahia), in Cecult (Centro de Cultura, Linguagens e Tecnologias Aplicadas). He has articles published in several magazines and books (collections) and four books, the most recent being *Décio Pignatari - vida noosfera* (2nd ed Educ Editora da PUC SP), and *A síntese imprevista: arte e invenção no Brasil dos anos 60 e 70* (Unpredicted synthesis - art and invention in Brazil in the 60s/ 70) (Ed. Medusa, 2022) <https://www.youtube.com/c/LucioAgra-arteavivo>. E-mail: lucioagra@ufrb.edu.br

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Submitted: 02/16/2023
Resubmitted: 04/04/2023
Accepted: 04/14/2023